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ABSTRACT

A study extended the work of M. Allen and R. Preiss (1990) that analyzed the issues in public speaking textbooks and the level of accuracy with which scientific information is represented. A total score analysis of 112 textbooks showed no significant improvement in the accuracy of textbooks over time or with new editions. Findings of the preliminary analysis suggest that public speaking and persuasion textbooks are not benefiting from the research advances in the field. More collaboration between research findings and pedagogical practices is needed. (Contains 177 references and 3 tables of data.) (Author/RS)

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EXAMINING TEXTBOOKS:

AN ANALYSIS EXAMINING

CHANGES OVER TIME

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ABSTRACT

EXAMINING TEXTBOOKS:

AN ANALYSIS INVOLVING

CHANGES OVER TIME

This analysis seeks to extend the work of Allen and Preiss (1990) that analyzes the issues in public speaking textbook and the level of accuracy with which scientific information is represented. A total score analysis of 112 textbooks shows no significant improvement in the accuracy of textbooks over time ($r_{(110)} = .09$, $p > .05$) or with new editions ($r_{(59)} = .14$, $p > .05$). The results of this preliminary analysis indicates that public speaking and persuasion textbooks are not benefiting from the research advances in the field. The paper talks about the need for more collaboration between research findings and pedagogical practices.

Public speaking and persuasion represent one of the largest educational tasks for Communication Departments in this country. Most communication departments are considered responsible for training students in the effective and responsible use of oral communication. As both consumers and producers, the goal of most courses is to improve the ability of students to produce and critically analyze public discourse. An enormous amount of the scholarship in our discipline considers how communicators might improve the effectiveness of the persuasive messages. This effort involves a focus that combines pedagogy and research in the effort to develop an applied science.

Textbooks form one basis of instructional materials. From the time of Aristotle's, *The Rhetoric* (trans. by Cooper, 1932), persons have generated advice for speakers. Public speaking and persuasion teachers comment on the effectiveness of various kinds of support (evidence or proof) that one can offer to make a particular point. How should a speech be organized, what kinds of words used to represent ideas, how to best introduce a speech, offer a conclusion, or the tests of reasoning, all become important issues. All of these issues represent areas that instructors (and textbook authors) routinely offer advice to the students in the classroom. The instructor should provide the best possible advice to improve the student's performance. The instructor needs a basis in experience or research to provide authoritative advice. Telling students to use their "best judgment" can only have meaning after some instruction and guidance on how to evaluate various options. This paper considers how textbooks form a basis for offering that guidance.

Modern social science continues to test various statements about the comparative effectiveness of public speaking and persuasion strategies. The key to scientific investigations remains the accumulation and comparison of the experiences of persons participating in experimental

situations. The scientist using quantitative data relies not on the personal experience of the instructor as a communicator but instead seeks to gather and systematically analyze the experiences of many individuals. The belief is that when the experiences of hundreds or thousands of persons are accumulated, a general principle becomes possible. The systematization of these principles eventually contributes to an organizing principle represented as a theory. Ultimately, evaluations of a persuasion or public speaking theory stem from praxis, the practical wisdom of experience as applied by individuals. The next section of the paper considers how science offers a basis for the practice of individuals.

META-ANALYSIS AS METHOD OF LITERATURE SUMMARY

Textbooks provide advice to speakers about various issues and considerations when constructing a message. Almost all textbooks consider some form of issues dealing with: research, credibility, audience analysis, speech organization, speech content, introductions, and conclusions. In addition, typical textbook often focuses on a variety of types of presentation (ceremonial, deliberative, expository, persuasive, discussion, etc.). The textbooks provide instruction and advice about the various settings, audiences, and techniques of speaking. The textbook represents, or should represent, an informed opinion, rooted in the practice and experience of speaking. The extent to which a textbook provides a sense of how to apply existing knowledge in a meaningful way for the student represents a successful application of existing knowledge.

Textbooks usually base the advice on some type of previous experience. Some books might consider the experience of a group of professional speakers, the guidance offered by some general philosophy of presentation, or the personal experience of the author. More commonly, the textbooks rely on social scientific investigation that collects and compares the experience of thousands of participants in empirical

investigations. From the collected experience of the participants the textbook authors fashion advice to improve the effectiveness of the communicator. This advice does not offer a "sure thing" but rather provides a comparison of the average expected outcome when deciding between strategies. This information for the inexperienced communicator generates a baseline to judge the effectiveness of choices in message construction.

The problem is that the results of such investigations seem to contradict and generate inconsistent results. One investigation reports the results favoring one type of approach while another investigation does not conclude that the same approach is equally desirable. Another investigation might even conclude that the use of a particular strategy is disadvantageous. The result is the generation of contradictory sets of advice that come from the same set of empirical investigations. Students trying to formulate effective messages find little utility when offered contradictory or unusable information.

The research literature as a result begins to focus on the methodology of the experiment or the situation of the investigation. The research designs become the basis for comparing and attempt to explain the inconsistency. Scientists begin to study the experimental design rather than the issues in public presentation/persuasion. One result of inconsistent research results focuses attention on the "uniqueness" of the situation, topic, audience, or some other feature. The result is the generation of systems that argue against the existence of easily generalizable conclusions on the basis of existing research. Terms like "situational specificity" or "dynamics of the particular audience" represent attempts to create a sense of a variable and changing system that much be analyzed and a combination of elements considered before making a choice.

The inconsistency problem for the literature review begins to resemble a "connect the dots" exercise. The literature reviewer tries to

provide an explanation that "fit" or "explains" all the results. Each empirical result become treated as an existing fact, the reviewer must find a way to provide an explanation for the inconsistency. The result comprises a set of conditional advice that tells the communicator that one must consider various "factors" when making a speech. The basis for the use of the factors is generally not some overriding theoretical model but rather usually an empirically driven set of advice stemming from the acceptance of various findings as true. One result of the approach is usually the lack of a general theoretical or comprehensive approach (one counterexample is the motivated sequence, but little research exists directly testing that model). So the points become "factoids" that become evaluated and applied individually rather than holistically.

The problem of inconsistent research results stems primarily from Type II error or false negative research findings (Hunter & Schmidt, 1990). Normally, Type II error runs at about a 50% level within an individual experiment. At the level of research hypotheses across a domain of literature the Type II error rate is almost 100%. In other words, seldom do theoretically driven researchers in the social sciences create hypotheses that receive no support. A much more typical outcome is that the research literature will demonstrate some studies with significant findings and other studies with nonsignificant findings. The result is that some studies support the hypothesis while other studies fail to replicate the findings. Replication studies will introduce additional variables to "explain" the inconsistency and each subsequent replication adds to the ever growing morass of confusion. A properly conducted meta-analysis in such instances would find that the disagreement between the studies was simply the outcome of Type II error (false negatives), and such error is random.

The process of quantitative research synthesis, or meta-analysis provides the ability to systematically aggregate existing research. The

results permit textbook writers to capitalize on existing findings to provide substantial and accurate support for statements offering advice to public communicators. Meta-analysis offers the prospect of providing a synthesis that reduces Type II error and generates consistency across a domain of research. Meta-analysis also permits the examination of potential moderator variables as well as the construction and testing of theoretical models.

USING META-ANALYSIS TO EVALUATE TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks vary in content and advice. Contrary to much of the existing lore that public speaking textbooks differ little, systematic reviews have found differences between textbooks (Allen & Preiss, 1990). Textbooks vary in the quality of the advice given to students. By variance in quality, sometimes the advice is consistent with existing meta-analyses and other times the advice is not. The real question is to what degree the available literature is accurately summarized and represented by the textbook. The challenge that meta-analysis provides to textbook authors is the need for accuracy in representing results. A textbook representing the literature in a manner inconsistent with the available meta-analysis would require a strong justification for doing so.

This paper does not argue that meta-analysis is the final arbiter. Instead, meta-analysis represents the "best available" summary of the literature. A meta-analysis using a set of studies after a comprehensive search of the literature and proper statistical techniques should be given a heavy weight in generating conclusions about a body of research. It is possible for a variety of reasons to disagree with any particular meta-analysis, but such reasons should at a minimum articulated. The failure to articulate the basis for rejection of the conclusion, and a statement clearly inconsistent with the finding, indicates a questionable practice.

Allen and Preiss (1990) evaluated textbooks using four different meta-analyses. They examined whether the textbook offered advice consistent or inconsistent with the existing meta-analyses. They found that on average, the advice given by the textbooks was right about 50% of the time. That is, when authors offered advice, about 50% of the time that advice was consistent with the existing meta-analysis. This indicates that for any given issue, textbooks (when the issue was mentioned) were as accurate as flipping a coin in terms of the accuracy of the representation. Such a conclusion across a body of textbooks in the largest area of communication education is not a desirable state.

Meta-analysis, as a procedure, offers a better form of reviewing the literature than the traditional use of narrative or vote counting of significant tests. The result is that the meta-analysis offers a superior form of literature summary than simply providing a citation to an individual experiment. Authors of books, rather than selecting, at random, an experiment for deciding about how to represent a particular point are always better off using an available meta-analysis.

This paper considers the impact that accumulating scientific knowledge should have on the available textbooks. One outcome of scientific data collection is that we expect ultimately the available educational materials to improve. As more is known, and hundreds of investigations accumulate, the assumption is that scientific knowledge will grow. We expect that scientific knowledge in the 1990's to be better than our understanding in the 1960's but not as good as the level of understanding available in the decade of the 2020's. What every instructor would like to believe is that the benefits of research provide better advice as the evidence accumulates. The need is for a "trickle down" from the empirical investigations, a meta-analysis and then incorporation into a textbook. We expect lags to occur, and that sometimes the road will be bumpy and inconsistent, but over the longer term progressive.

The purpose of this paper is to examine that trend. The objective is to take public speaking and persuasion textbooks from the current time and go backwards into the early part of this century and determine if the accuracy of the claims offered has improved or not. Basically, has the inclusion of scientific practices had the impact of improving our pedagogy. If the two are connected, then textbooks should demonstrate significant improvement over time as the level of scientific knowledge expands.

EVALUATING PERSUASION AND PUBLIC SPEAKING TEXTBOOKS

Selection of Textbooks

The selection of textbooks for this review was based on convenience and availability. There exists no comprehensive method of defining the population to select a sample, nor are there repositories that guarantee or assure that textbooks would be available. No general system exists for compiling the list of persuasion and public speaking textbooks. No index or computer system, like that for articles, is available. There is no real basis to sample or to evaluate the efforts of the collection.

The goal of the process was to find books that were divergent in the date of publication, publisher, and author. A secondary goal was to compare various editions of textbooks over time: Do editions of textbooks change and become more or less accurate over time as more research is conducted. This latter point represents the possibility that authors can reflect and improve the textbook with each subsequent edition. The argument is that each edition "improves" the textbook. So one consideration is whether textbooks have improved over time.

Coding of Textbooks

Textbooks were coded for the accuracy with which they represented the available empirical literature. A passage from a textbook was coded as either consistent (+), inconsistent (-), unclear or mixed (0), or a blank was left if no statement was made about the topic. Each topic was coded by

two people that met to resolve any disagreements. Disagreements were few, with agreement between coders at well over 98%.

Table 1 provides a list of the topics considered, the conclusions offered by the meta-analysis as well as a citation to the relevant meta-analyses used to generate the conclusions. This table is taken from Allen and Preiss (in press) summarizes seventeen existing meta-analyses. The key is that these represent not the final word in the area of the research but rather the best available summary of the findings.

In some areas, (i.e., the attitude-behavior relationship) the meta-analyses demonstrate a high degree of consistency with an existing theoretical position. The advantage this represents is the ability of textbooks to teach a standard set of findings and narrow the theoretical alternatives due to data that supports a theoretical model. For would be persuaders, knowing that attitudes predict behaviors creates a powerful tool.

Results of Coding

The results of the coding for particular textbooks appears in Table 2. Each book is rated for consistency with each meta-analysis. A blank indicates that the book did not mention this topic. As can be noticed from the table, the largest source of inconsistency is that the choice of inclusion of a topic varies from textbook to textbook.

The description of the 112 textbooks find the average publication date was 1979. The oldest book was published in 1927 (Doll) while several books were dated as 1997. Only one topic was mentioned and accurate in more than 70 of the textbooks (assertion evidence--66%). A more typical response was that the topics were not mentioned in most textbooks. With 112 textbooks and 17 possible topics there were a total of 1904 possible codes to make. A total of 359 codes were assigned, 19% of the possible total. Of those, 242 indicated accurate conclusions while 117 did not, an

accuracy rates of 67%. This is higher than that originally reported by Allen and Preiss (1990), but they only used four different meta-analyses. If the assertion evidence meta-analysis is deleted the accuracy drops to 59% (more comparable to the slightly higher than 50% reported by Allen and Preiss, 1990). Table 3 provides an issue by issue accumulation of the results.

Assertion evidence, the offering of an authority opinion to support a particular point, works to persuade and almost every textbook (63% of the total) that comments about assertive evidence agree (91% of those textbooks mentioning the issue). If one examines the collection of issues, one finds that there exists a great deal of diversity in representation over the issues, at least with respect to the accuracy of the statement. This review reaffirms the position that textbooks in public speaking and persuasion issues offer a wide variety of advice, contrary to the position that most books are all the same.

The first analysis considers whether the year of publication is correlated with the improvement in textbook representation. The results demonstrate no signification correlation ($r_{(110)} = .09$, $p > .05$) between year of publication and accuracy rating. This analysis indicates that the textbooks in this area are not necessarily improving as a result of the available research.

The next issue was the examination of the number of the textbook edition to determine if later editions were more accurate than early editions. A total of 59 textbooks were part of a series of multiple editions. Examining the number of the edition of the book versus the accuracy of the text shows no significant correlation ($r_{(57)} = .14$, $p > .05$). This finding indicates that later editions do not show evidence of improvement with regards to the accuracy with which a textbook author presents the available research. The trend is positive, that is later

editions do show some additional improvement, but that trend is not statistically significant.

FUTURE OF EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

One large advantage of meta-analysis is the ability to provide the basis for the evaluation of textbooks. As scientific theories are tested and some are discarded, the ability of the author of a text to improve the content grows. The scientific knowledge gathered from the experience of thousands of individuals forms the basis of the claims. The expectation is that public speaking and persuasion textbooks should start to demonstrate improvement as time passes. Since the field is only at the start of the process, not enough time may have passed for the effect of meta-analysis to be presented in the textbooks.

Encouraging signs do exist. For example, the Gronbeck, McKerrow, Monroe, and Ehninger demonstrates improvement from the 12th (1994) to the 13th (1997) edition, from three minus (-) to three plus (+). All of these come from the inclusion of meta-analysis in these sections. The key is that the authors simply changed the expectation of the standard of review from individual studies to quantitative reviews. This change reflects the trend across the social sciences. Cooper and Hedges (1994) for example point out that federal legislation for the issuing of health care policy guidelines **requires** any recommendations be supported by a systematic synthesis (meta-analysis) of the available research. The standards for recommendations are slowly changing, and communication scholarship is reflecting those changes.

This analysis of textbooks is only preliminary and requires expansion with the inclusion of additional textbooks. The authors are already at work expanding this analysis, paying particular attention to filling in gaps of missing editions of books to permit a more comprehensive analysis. In addition, the possibility exists that there might be a curvilinear

effect, that the accumulation of indecisive and contradictory research starting in the early 1950's actually confused textbooks. The advent of meta-analysis in the early 1980's worked to slowly improve textbooks. This might indicate that the books are improving but only after a trend of nonimprovement. Another configuration might be no change in accuracy until the 1980's and then an increase after meta-analysis arrives to provide comprehensive and authoritative summaries of the literature.

One note about fairness is required when comparing textbooks from 1927 to 1996. No one can reasonably expect that the author of a 1927 textbook can represent research findings that occurred decades later. But of course, that is the very point, textbooks should be more accurate in later years because the later authors have access to more and better information. The failure of the research outcomes to substantially contribute to the improvement in the information provided to students is some cause for concern. Methods must be developed that creates a necessary and expected connection between ongoing research outcomes and the practice of individuals. However, the process of influence should work both ways, instructors in public speaking and persuasion should identify those elements most important to the communication process and work with researchers in identifying those areas in need of investigation.

The key is that the process of communication requires a constant series of choices by the communicator to generate an effective message. The goal of education is to improve performance by indicating how those choices can be improved and providing feedback on the effect of those choices. Much of communication instruction intends to provide a sense of reflection about those choices. The belief is that research contributes to the process by indicating the impact of various choices, what outcomes are associated with various choices made by a communicator. The textbooks indicate the expected outcomes of those choices, but that representation is

made more accurate when it reflects the state of the art research summaries.

One nice consideration of this form of review is that authors and scholars can evaluate the accuracy, fairness, and completeness of this review. The process articulated by this evaluation of textbooks permits and encourages others to replicate and test the procedures offered. If someone disagrees with the interpretation of the textbook or the meta-analysis conclusion, a reanalysis and correction remains possible. In other words, the knowledge and application of that information should not be considered static but rather dynamic. Both research and textbooks should change over time.

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Table One

Meta-Analysis Outcomes Used for Coding

1. Assertion Evidence--Finding is that assertion evidence is more persuasive than not using such evidence (Reinard, in press)
2. Attitude-Behavior Relationship--A high correlation (r = .70+) between attitudes and behaviors exists. The findings support the theory of reasoned action model that has attitudes causing behavioral intentions which in turn causes behavior (Kim & Hunter, 1993a, 1993b; Sheppard, Harwick, & Warshaw, 1988).
3. Conclusion Drawing--A meta-analysis of very limited data indicates that an explicit conclusion is more persuasive than an implicit conclusion (Cruz, in press)
4. Counterattitudinal Advocacy (Choice & Incentives)--(Preiss & Allen, 1994)--The results demonstrate that persons choosing to generate a counterattitudinal message change their attitudes more than those required to participate. Low incentives were more persuasive than high incentives when producing counterattitudinal messages.
5. Distraction--(Buller, 1986, Buller & Hall, 1994)--This meta-analysis argues that communication irrelevant distractions (noise, etc) work to reduce message comprehension and decrease the persuasiveness of the message. Message relevant distractions work to inhibit counterarguing and would therefore increase the persuasiveness of the message.
6. Door-in-the-face--(Dillard, Hunter, & Burgoon, 1984; Fern, Monroe, & Avila, 1986)--These meta-analyses agree that DITF represents an effective persuasive strategy, although there exists no consensus about the impact of various moderator variables.

7. Fear Appeals--(Boster & Mongeau, 1984; Mongeau, 1994; Sutton, 1982). Three different meta-analyses conclude that high fear appeals are more persuasive then low fear appeals.

8. Foot-in-the-Door--(Beamon, Cole, Preston, Klentz, & Steblay, 1988; Dillard, Hunter, & Burgoon, 1984; Fern, Monroe, & Avila, 1986)--The meta-analyses demonstrate the FITD constitutes an effective persuasive strategy although there is little agreement on the nature of existing moderator variables.

9. Forewarning--(Benoit, 1994). Results of a meta-analysis indicate that message receivers forewarned as less susceptible to persuasion than persons unforewarned.

10. Involvement, evidence, and source credibility--(Johnson & Eagly, 1989; Stiff, 1986)--the meta-analyses find a positive linear relationship between the level of message receiver involvement and supporting information in a message. There exists a curvilinear relationship between message sender credibility and receiver involvement such that at low levels of involvement the relationship with message source credibility is positive until it peaks and then as involvement increases the impact of message source credibility is negative.

11. Language Intensity--(Hamilton & Hunter, 1994)--The meta-analysis summarized in a path model finds that a message source using intense language will increase their rating of credibility by a message receiver.

12. Message Sidedness--(Allen, 1991; 1993a; 1994; Allen, Hale, Mongeau, Stafford-Berkowitz, Stafford, Shanahan, Agee, Dillon, Jackson, & Ray, 1990; O'Keefe, 1993). The results of the meta-analysis, its replication, and a large experiment demonstrate that a two-sided message with refutation is more persuasive than a one-sided message.

13. Persuadability of Genders--(Eagly & Carli, 1981)--This meta-analysis concludes that there exists no assumption that females are more influenceable than males across the existing pool of studies.

14. Powerful/Powerless Language--(Burrell & Koper, 1994)--The conclusion is that persons using more powerful language are judged as more credible and more persuasive than persons using powerless language.

15. Rhetorical Questions----(Gayle, Preiss, & Allen, 1994)--This meta-analysis points to the persuasive impact of indirect questions in a message (only three studies). Direct rhetorical questions did not improve persuasion.

16. Sleeper Effect--(Allen & Reynolds, 1993; Allen & Stiff, 1989, 1994)--This summary of data does not provide an average effect estimate as does most summaries. The summary does, however, provide consistent evidence for the existence of the sleeper effect.

17. Timing of Source Credibility--(Allen & Associates, 1990; O'Keefe, 1987)--Results of a meta-analysis, supported by a large replication, indicate that high credible sources are maximally persuasive when information on source credibility is presented prior to the message. Presentation of source credibility after the message minimizes the impact of differential credibility for the message source.

*In many cases there exist moderator variables within a meta-analysis. This discussion does not consider all moderator variables existing unless the impact of the moderator fundamentally changes the existence of the relationship. Readers are encouraged to consult the primary sources for a full discussion of all methodological, theoretical, and statistical issues.

Table 2

Results of Coding

Textbook[1]		Effect Number from Table 1															
	date	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Abernathy	1964	+		-														
Andersen	1973										-	+				-	+	
Andersen	1964	+	+					+				+			+			
Andrews	1979	+		+														
Applbaum	1979	+	+	-		-		+		+			-	-			+	+
Ayres 2nd ed	1986	+						-	+				+					
Baker	1965	+																
Barker 3rd ed	1984	+		+				+		+			-					
Barker 4th ed	1987																	
Barrett 6th ed	1987	+																
Bettinghaus	1968	-	+	-									-					
Bettinghaus 3rd	1980		-		+		+	-	+				-					
Bogart	1984		+		+						-	-	-	-	-			+
Bogart	1996	+	+					+										
Bostrom	1983	-	+					-			+	-		+	+	-		
Breaden	1996	+	+	-				-					+	+	-			
Brembeck	1952	+	-								-							
Brembeck 2nd ed	1976		-								-				-			
Bryant 4th ed	1947	+									+			-		-		
Bryant 9th ed	1976												+					
Buckley	1988	+											+			-		
Carnegie	1955	+																
Chamberlain	1892																	
Cialdini	1984						+		+									

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Osborn 2nd ed	1991	+											-				+	
Osborn 3rd ed	1994	+	+									+	+				0	+
Paulson	1991																	
Percy	1983		+													-		
Peterson 2nd	1984	+																
Petty	1981	+	+	-	+	-		+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	+	+
Petty	1986		-					-		+			-	-		0	-	
Pfau	1993	+	-	+				+					+					
Phillips	1908	+																
Phillips	1985	+																
Powers	1987	+																
Reardon	1987		-		+	+					+	+	+				+	
Reardon	1991	-	-		+	+		-		+	-	-		-	+		-	
Reid	1982	+		+				-				+	+				+	
Robinson	1967		+		+			+		+	+		-	-			+	
Ross	1974				+			-										
Ross 3rd ed.	1990	-	-					-		+	-			-	-			
Ross 4th ed.	1992	+	-					-		+	-			-	+			
Ross 5th ed.	1980	+											+					
Ross 9th ed.	1992	+											+					
Samovar 3rd ed	1976	+	+															
Samovar	1983	+	-	+							+		-					
Sarrett	1956	+																
Sarrett 3rd ed	1958																	
Seiler 2nd ed.	1992	+																
Simons	1976		-					-										
Simons 2nd ed	1986	+	-	-		+	-	+					-					
Smith	1982	-	+		+			-	-	+			+					
Soper 2nd ed.	1956	+																
Sprague	1984	+											-					

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Table 3

Summary of Results Issue by Issue

Issue	Assertion Evidence	Attitude/ Behavior	Conclusion Drawing	Counter-Attitudinal	Distract
# Responses	79	40	21	13	7
% Accurate	94%	80%	66%	92%	57%
% Inaccurate	6%	20%	34%	8%	43%

Issue	DoorinFace	Fear	FootinDoor	Forewarn	Involve Evid/Cred
# Responses	6	31	10	15	23
% Accurate	100%	45%	90%	80%	70%
% Inaccurate	0%	55%	10%	20%	30%

Issue	Intensity	Sidedness	Gender	Language Power	Rhetorical Questions
# Responses	20	38	20	8	7
% Accurate	65%	61%	35%	50%	0%
% Inaccurate	35%	39%	65%	50%	100%

Issue	Sleeper	Source Timing
# Responses	12	8
% Accurate	83%	100%
% Inaccurate	17%	0%